

HUMAN RESOURCES MEMORANDUM
FACULTY AND STAFF COMMUNICATION
EMPLOYMENT ISSUES RELATED TO COVID-19

Dear Faculty and Staff,

The purpose of this communication is to provide some additional information related to the University's COVID-19 response and specific impact on the workplace.

I hope that this communication will provide additional clarity and fills in some blanks. That said, I fully acknowledge that it may raise additional questions. While our multi-disciplinary team has been working diligently on the University's response to these unprecedented circumstances, we simply do not have all the answers. Feel free to let me know if you have specific questions which I can address.

The University is implementing certain pandemic disease protocols for employees. The purpose of which is to allow flexible leave and alternate work arrangements in order to ensure that employees can provide appropriate care to themselves and their families while facilitating business continuity to the greatest extent possible. These protocols will remain in effect for such duration as the University deems necessary, in consultation with our internal team and public health officials.

Operational Continuity

For now, University operations will continue as normal, and employees should report to work on campus unless they are sick, at-risk, have permission to work remotely or on a flexible schedule, or unless reporting to work would cause an undue hardship because they are caring for a sick family member or providing childcare as a result of school closures. All these topics will be covered in more detail below.

Sick Employees

If you are sick you must stay home! Do not report to work on campus with symptoms of COVID-19 or any other communicable illness. All employees should

be vigilant and [self-monitor](#) for any signs or symptoms of COVID19. Employees who have contracted the disease; are demonstrating symptoms of the disease; are [providing direct care](#) to someone with the disease, or who have traveled to an area with an active CDC alert (Note: You are required to notify the University) are prohibited from reporting to work for a minimum of two weeks. Employees in these circumstances may work remotely, establish a flexible work arrangement, or take leave as may be required. The practice of requiring a medical certification has been suspended for these circumstances.

At Risk Employees

Certain people are at an [increased risk for complications](#) from the coronavirus, including those diagnosed with chronic lung disease, heart disease, diabetes, immune system disorders/diseases; and individuals 60 years of age or older. If you are at increased risk or live in the same household as someone believed to be at increased risk, please consult with your health care provider for more information about monitoring your health for symptoms suggestive of COVID-19.

While most people with COVID-19 will be able to recover at home, people who are at higher risk and develop symptoms of COVID-19 should seek medical advice sooner than people who are younger and/or otherwise healthy. Those with increased risk or living in the same household as someone with increased risk, may receive direction from their physician to avoid the workplace for a specified duration. Employees in these circumstances may work remotely, establish a flexible work arrangement, or take leave as may be required. The practice of requiring a medical certification has been suspended for these circumstances.

Providing Childcare

The University recognizes the hardship caused by the recent closing of K-12 schools in both Ohio and West Virginia, with more states to follow suit. Employees in these circumstances may work remotely, establish a flexible work arrangement, or take leave as may be required.

Flexible Leave and Alternate Work Arrangements

Any employee, or an employee with a household member, who is experiencing symptoms of, been diagnosed with, or at risk for or COVID-19 or is providing

childcare for a child due to a school closure may make use of the following arrangements.

- **Paid Sick Leave:** Employees may use accrued sick and vacation time to cover such absences. If an employee's leave accrual is exhausted due to one of the above circumstances, the University will provide additional paid leave through the established voluntary sick bank.
- **Flexible Work Arrangements:** Employees may adjust their regular work schedules based on their own unique circumstances. A flextime schedule can take many forms, including a shortened workweek, variations in arrival or departure time, or other changes to the employee's typical work schedule.
- **Remote Work Arrangements:** Employees may seek the option of telecommuting or working remotely on an occasional or regular basis. Employees who work remotely must comply with all University policies and procedures, including adequately safeguarding and securing any restricted or confidential information with which they work. These arrangements will require access to a virtual private network and will require clearance by Information Technology Services.

The above options are not mutually exclusive. An employee and/or their supervisor may elect to make use of all three of the above options, if doing so meets the unique needs of the employee and University based on individual circumstances.

The University is requesting that supervisors provide maximum flexibility as it relates to establishing alternate work arrangements. That said, the nature of some positional and departmental responsibilities may not allow for flextime scheduling, and therefore supervisors, in consultation with their divisional administrators (Note: this means the VPAA for Faculty and Academic Affairs staff) must approve such arrangements.

Furthermore, the University reserves the right to implement changes to the work arrangement as may be required for operational continuity. Employees should

Speak directly with their supervisors to determine whether this is feasible and to establish the details of such arrangements.

Travel

Under no circumstances may any employee travel to any area with an [active alert](#). No employee may engage in University sponsored travel which is not considered mission critical or essential. Such travel must be cleared by your divisional administrator (Note: this means the VPAA for Faculty and Academic Affairs staff). Furthermore, employees are asked to curtail their personal travel.

Events and Meetings

Effective as of March 11, 2020 and until further notice, all University-sponsored events, are to be adjusted, postponed, or cancelled as appropriate. This does not apply to mass or religious services. If you have a question about whether an event should be cancelled please contact David Schmiesing (*6234) who will review the request with an ad hoc team, according to an established rubric.

In order to limit in-person interactions and the possible spread of viruses, employees are strongly encouraged to move larger meetings to group chats or teleconference calls as may be required or practicable.

Prevention

The University cares about the well-being of every person in our community. Accordingly, the University strongly encourages everyone on campus to follow standard Center for Disease Control (CDC) preventive guidelines:

- Practice good hygiene. [Wash your hands often with soap and water](#) for at least 20 seconds, especially after coughing, sneezing, or shaking hands with people. If soap and water are not available, the CDC recommends using a hand sanitizer made with at least 60 percent alcohol but warns that these solutions do not kill all germs.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- If you are experiencing fever, cough, and/or shortness of breath, visit the University's Wellness Center or your health care provider immediately.

- Minimize physical contact with casual acquaintances by substituting a polite nod or other gesture instead of handshakes.
- Practice respiratory etiquette. The main way the virus spreads from person to person is in the droplets produced by coughs and sneezes. Therefore, it is important to cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. If you do not have a tissue, you should cough or sneeze into your elbow or shoulder, not your hands.
- Disinfect surfaces that may have been contaminated.
- Avoid close contact with those who are ill or think they may be ill.
- Stay home if you feel ill or have any signs of respiratory illness.
- Get a flu vaccine as recommended by the CDC during the flu season. If you have been prescribed flu antiviral medication, please make sure to take it.
- Please follow the advice of your health care provider.

Also, the University encourages everyone to stay current with the information available on the CDC's website (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>).

The University will provide ongoing communication as circumstances develop. You can find more information on our main resource page which is the Coronavirus tab on MyFranciscan (https://myfranciscan.franciscan.edu/ICS/Corona_Virus/)

I know that the uncertainty of this situation causes all of us great concern. I have been heartened and have a great sense of optimism as a result of seeing so many of you rising to meet this current challenge. But most importantly I am heartened by the knowledge that our hope is in the Lord who will never fail us! His steadfast love endures forever! Despite being surrounded by this current scourge, we know that the Lord is our strength, our song, and our salvation – He will answer us and set us free!

I know that this is a lengthy document, but I thought it was necessary based on the questions that we have received and are attempting to anticipate. Please let me know if you have any question or concerns.

Peace and blessings,

Brenan